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MR. McLEAN HOME FROM WEST.

Finds an Interesting Country and is Delighted With It.

Mr. A. W. McLean returned Tuesday from a trip to Oklahoma, Indian Territory, New Mexico and Texas, where he spent several days. Mr. McLean talked interestingly to the Robesonian reporter of his trip and the country where he went.

"On my trip," said Mr. McLean, "I saw South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. The principal cities through which I passed were Atlanta, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, South McAlester, Oklahoma City, Amarillo, Fort Worth and Dennison, Texas.

"The cotton crop in the States through which I passed was, upon the whole, very good—much better than the crop in Robeson county. In Arkansas, Indian Territory, Oklahoma and Texas, the cotton crop is especially good. It is far better than the crop here. I talked with farmers, merchants and cotton buyers in these States and they estimated the crop at 80 to 90 per cent. of a perfect crop. They are having great trouble about getting it picked. Many of the fields in Oklahoma and Texas have not been picked over.

"By the way, when Oklahoma and Texas become fully settled up with cotton farmers and the labor conditions there become good, I believe our section will have to give up cotton raising because we can not compete with these States. I saw cotton in Texas and Oklahoma that would make from one bale to a bale and a-half per acre without one particle of fertilizers. In fact, fertilizer is not used out there at all. They laugh at you when you mention fertilizer. Besides they can cultivate their lands so much easier and cheaper than we do. They have no stumps and can use improved plows, cultivators and other farm machinery. There is one county in Oklahoma, with only two per cent. of its cotton land in cultivation, which raises twice as much cotton as Robeson county.

"Why, almost every crop you can think of is successfully raised there. Among those I saw and now recall were Indian corn, Kaffir corn, milo-maize, alfalfa, wheat, sugar cane, potatoes, water-melons and all garden products and fruits. They make from forty to sixty bushels of Indian corn and from fifty to seventy-five bushels of Kaffir corn to the acre, with about half the cultivation we give to our crops. Kaffir corn is one of their principal crops and is the finest kind of feed for horses, cattle and hogs. They make 4,000 pounds of alfalfa to the acre and it is the finest stock feed in the world.

"Of the portion of the country that I saw, the part that interested and impressed me most was Oklahoma, Western Texas and New Mexico, mainly because the conditions there were so unlike what I expected. In Oklahoma I saw fine farms of cotton and every other crop including wheat, which produces thirty to sixty bushels per acre. The best farming lands near railroads sell for fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars per acre. The towns are rich and prosperous. Take Oklahoma city, for example; about 17 years ago the land upon which the town is situated was given by the United States government as a homestead to a settler.

Now it is a thriving city of forty thousand inhabitants, with a complete system of sewerage, electric lights, street cars, paid fire departments, large hotels and other improvements. In Western Texas near Amarillo and Eastern New Mexico, which is the semi-arid section, I saw a veritable boom. This section, up to three years ago, was considered only a stock-raising country, with its large ranches, containing in many cases one to three million acres of prairie land each. The chief industry and practically the only industry was cattle raising and the lands could be bought at twenty cents to one dollar per acre. The native land owners claimed that it was useless to try to raise any crops except grass. About three years ago the United States government opened up the public lands in Eastern New Mexico adjoining the Texas Panhandle to settlers, each being entitled under certain conditions to a quarter section, or one hundred and sixty acres. With the general influx of settlers to these public lands came many farmers from Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas and the Dakotas. They soon discovered that these lands were just as good as the lands which they had left at home, and that they could, by intelligent cultivation, raise any crops which could be raised in their own States. These settlers are now raising the finest kind of Indian corn, kaffir corn, wheat, oats, milo-maize, alfalfa, potatoes, fruit, melons and vegetables. The country is entirely transformed. All the valuable public lands have been taken up, and for the past twelve to eighteen months farmers from the middle Western States are coming in by the train load and buying these lands in the Texas Panhandle at prices ranging from eight to twenty five dollars per acre. I heard a ranch owner say that lands which he purchased several years ago at twenty cents an acre, he was now selling readily at two dollars an acre. The immigrant and colonization agents are making contracts to settle the lands and are succeeding wonderfully. One large concern from Chicago settled sixty-five thousand acres with three train loads of immigrants. The settlers are a fine class of people from the middle Western States, and will succeed anywhere. I talked with a great many of these people, and found them all contented and enthusiastic over the future prospect of their new homes. They say that the soil is just as rich as that in their own States and that the climate is much better.

As to the rainfall in that section, it used to be considered a semi-arid section, but for the past four or five years they have had plenty of rain in Oklahoma and the Panhandle of Texas. At Amarillo, Texas, the chief town of the Panhandle, the United States Weather Bureau records show an average of about 24 inches of rainfall annually for the past ten years and then too, all the rains come in the summer months when the crops most need them. But I found many farmers who said they could make good crops with one or two rains a year, and they did not seem at all concerned about rains. Inquired into this, and I learned that the farmers living in the semi-arid belt of the middle West, where there would be only one or two rains a year, had discovered a system which made average crops a certainty, in fact much more so than in the humid section where we live, and where

too much rain is usually the trouble. This system of dry-weather farming is called the Campbell system of soil culture, and its success is now beyond question, for it has been used in the middle West for eight or ten years and has transformed Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado from a drought-stricken section to a rich farming country. I saw an experiment farm near Texico, New Mexico, which is being operated according to the Campbell System.

"The nature of the Campbell System I can't explain fully because it will take too long, but the main principle is to conserve the moisture in the land from one period to another by a system of soil culture following certain well known scientific principles. I purchased a book fully describing the system, which you may read if you are further interested.

"Have they given up cotton raising since they learned that these lands were good for agricultural purposes?"

"Oh! No. On the contrary, they can raise cattle more successfully than ever, for instead of allowing the cattle to live entirely on native grass, they are now able to feed them on alfalfa, Kaffir corn, milo-maize and other farm products and thereby produce much finer beef. Another industry which the North Western farmer has brought with him is hog raising and this bids fair to become far more lucrative and successful than cattle raising. I saw the finest cattle and hogs I ever saw in my life in the same section where I saw the fine crops.

"About one hundred miles west of the Texas line in New Mexico, near Raswell, irrigation is resorted to with the greatest success. They have artesian wells for private irrigation and then the United States government is spending a great deal of money for public irrigation. In this section they have no rains and depend entirely upon irrigation. This is the richest land in the United States, and when irrigated produces twice as much as any other land. It sells, near the railroad, for two hundred to five hundred dollars per acre, after being irrigated and improved. It is in this section that the finest apples, pears and other fruits are raised, besides all kinds of grain.

"This is admitted one of the most healthful climates in the country. In the particular sections of Texas and New Mexico to which I refer, the altitude ranges from two thousand to three thousand six hundred feet above sea level and the air is dry and invigorating. I saw dozens of people who had gone there from all sections of the United States, for consumption, asthma, hay-fever and throat diseases, and they all had been cured. Of course some who go there when the disease is too far advanced, die. The most disagreeable part of the weather out there is the winds. They don't have cyclones, but occasionally they have strong winds, which blow the dust everywhere.

"There are two kinds of this rich soil, one called the 'black' and the other 'chocolate,' the names having been given on account of the color. In the Panhandle of Texas and Eastern New Mexico and Oklahoma the chocolate soil is most common. It is usually two to four feet in depth, and the land is smooth prairie

(Continued on page eight.)

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